

Commercial and Industrial Buildings,
Armour and Company Meat Packing Plant
298 Iowa Street
Dubuque
Dubuque County
Iowa

HABS No. IA-160-K

HABS
IOWA,
31-DUBU,
13-K-

**PHOTOGRAPHS
HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA**

Historic American Buildings Survey
Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
P.O. Box 25287
Denver Colorado 80225

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Site Location: 298 Iowa Street
Dubuque, Dubuque County, Iowa
DOT designation: Resource Site No. 7.8
Cadastral grid : SE1/4 NE1/4 S25 T89N R2E
USGS quadrangle: Dubuque South Iowa 7.5'
UTM coordinates: 15.692000.4707560
Lot dimensions : 60'x 158': .22 acre
Lot description: North 60' of Lot 745.

Present Owner: Iowa Department of Transportation
Present Usage: vacant
Present Condition : fair

Overall Dimensions: 125'x 41'; 2 stories
Orientation : west
Architectural Plan type : 2-story rectangular, open-space warehouse.
Description : Foundation: (below grade).
Structure : wood frame with brick masonry bearing walls.
Ext. walls: common red brick laid in common bond.
Roof : flat composition roof with brick parapet walls.
Chimneys : all original exterior chimneys removed.
Openings : painted wood 1/1 double-hung windows with loose lintels and concrete (or stone) lug sills throughout, almost all now infilled with concrete block and/or glass block; single-leaf main entrance in southwest corner has decorative stone lintel with small stone brackets and corbeled brick panel in wall above.

Details : corbeled brick courses and stone string course on front parapet and over heads of upper level windows.

Construction Date : 1910

Architecture Style: 20th Century Functional

Physical History : Constructed by Nadeau and Rogers, Dubuque's first steam-powered flour mill was located on this site in 1847. Replaced in 1861 by a new structure, the Dubuque City Mill, as the facility was later named, was destroyed by fire on June 16, 1880. By 1884 the Key City Barrel Factory and Feed Mill had built a frame and brick complex on the site, which in turn burnt down in 1890. By 1909 Armour and Company had acquired the property and had built a two-story refrigerator house on Third Street near the railroad tracks. Then, in 1910 the meat packing company erected this two-story brick block to house its expanded operations in Dubuque. Reportedly costing \$45,000, the

building was completed in October. "Probably it is unsurpassed for modern ideas by any other similar meat concern in the country," the *Dubuque Telegraph-Herald* reported of the plant soon after its completion. "The new Armour and Company storage plant is a tribute to Oubuque as the greatest packing concern in the world, inasmuch as it shows the confidence of outsiders in the future of the city." The wood-framed structure was organized with a business office in the front of the first floor, abutting a large cooler; the second floor was taken entirely by meat smoking, processing and storage.

With Arthur Sigman and, later, J.C. Love as managers, the plant continued its meat operations through the 1920s. In the 1930s Armour shifted its Oubuque operation to strictly that of a creamery. In 1935 a one-story addition was built onto the rear to accommodate a butter packing and tub manufacturing room, and the smokehouse on the second floor was no longer used. About 1960 Armour ceased operations here. Used since then by cold storage companies, the plant has recently been acquired by the Iowa Department of Transportation in preparation for construction of a proposed highway.

Significance: The Armour and Company Meat Packing Plant is historically significant for its association with one of the biggest operators in Oubuque's important meat processing industry. Its 1910 construction date marks it as one of the more recent of the city's early packing houses. The building is a representative example of the 20th Century Functional design, the utilitarian style used overwhelmingly for manufacturing and warehousing structures in this industrial district.

References: Oubuque City Directories: 1857 - 1970.
Sanborn Insurance Maps: 1884, 1891, 1909, 1972.
Iowa State Gazetteer and Business Directory: 1882-1923.
Oubuque County Assessment Record: 3 17-4-1.
Iowa Department of Transportation, "Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Cultural Resources Assessment."
Timothy O'Regan, "Old Mills in Oubuque," (unpublished paper), Loras College Library, Dubuque.
Dubuque Daily Herald: 30 October 1861.
Dubuque Daily Times: 17 June 1880.
Dubuque Telegraph-Herald: 1 January 1911.

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